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Viewing cable 05CAIRO4535, EGYPT: ARCENT COMMANDER HEARS BRIGHT STAR

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#05CAIRO4535**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05CAIRO4535	2005-06-15 16:49	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9135>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9164>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9146>
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<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10073>
<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10185>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 004535

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [SU](#) [SY](#) [CH](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: ARCENT COMMANDER HEARS BRIGHT STAR
EXERCISE PLANNING ON TRACK

Classified by Acting DCM Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: During June 15 meetings with Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials in Cairo, ARCENT Commander LTG Whitcomb was told that BRIGHT STAR planning was progressing well and that MoD saw no outstanding problems (such as invitations to the three observer countries which were of concern to the U.S.). Egyptian Chief of Staff Weheba reiterated his hope that some U.S. Congressmen would visit Egypt during BRIGHT STAR. On Iraq, Weheba stressed that Egypt's offer to train Iraqi troops was still valid and that cost was not an issue. Egypt was willing to meet Iraq's training and cost requirements. He added that eastern bloc equipment in Egypt's inventory allowed Egypt to train Iraqi soldiers on the type of equipment they were most likely to use. Weheba said Egypt was also open to further U.S. advice on how the MoD might contribute to Afghan stability. He cited recent security enhancements in the approaches to the Suez Canal (made at our request) as focused on supporting U.S. transits. End summary.

2. (C) Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Weheba told visiting ARCENT Commander LTG Whitcomb in Cairo June 15 that he was pleased with BRIGHT STAR planning. Whitcomb had just come from a meeting with Training Authority Chief MG Mokhtar, at which Mokhtar confirmed that invitees of concern to the U.S. (Syria, China, and Sudan) would not be invited as observers. Weheba stated that he "did not believe there were any problems or issues" which had not been sorted out. Weheba was anxious "to see the best BRIGHT STAR" ever conducted. Whitcomb noted that some participant nations would be evaluating certain military capabilities "in unfamiliar terrain," which gave the exercise added relevance to various participants. Weheba reiterated MoD's interest in encouraging U.S. Congressional visitors to observe BRIGHT STAR 2005, noting the importance of pre-briefing participants to highlight the magnitude of "14 countries training together."

3. (C) Whitcomb reviewed Iraq issues briefly for Weheba, noting the importance of continuity in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. Weheba said Iraq was clearly serious about maintaining security and reiterated Egypt's offer to train more soldiers. Weheba said that during an April visit to Washington by the MoD White Paper team, MoD had been told that Iraq preferred to train its troops in Iraq partially due to cost implications. Field Marshal Tantawi had instructed his generals at that point to commit to training at a cost which "met the expectations" of Iraq. He said the GOE wanted to show its support for Iraq and was still offering training; it was "not a matter of cost," he asserted. He emphasized that the MoD was increasingly flexible in offering training that met Iraq's needs and cost requirements. Weheba said that Egypt, which maintains eastern bloc equipment in its inventory, could train Iraqi troops on the type of equipment that was being donated by eastern European countries.

4. (C) Finally, on Iraq, Weheba questioned the political meaning of a ceremony the previous day naming a "Kurdish president." He asked rhetorically if southern Iraq would be getting a Shia leader, which would have negative consequences for national unity. He wondered aloud "who is advising the Iraqi government?" He added, "I do not believe this is the right move or the right time."

5. (C) Thanking the MoD for donating arms and ammunition to the Afghan National Army (ANA), and for transporting a

portion of that donation in Egyptian C-130 aircraft, Whitcomb reminded Weheba that Afghanistan continued to need external security assistance. Weheba said the Egyptian MoD had taken U.S. advice regarding the donation to the ANA and would continue to do so in support of stability in Afghanistan. He hoped such efforts would have a positive impact on Congressional perceptions of Egypt's regional role.

16. (C) The Chief of Staff pointed out that Egypt had increased security for U.S. ships in the external anchorage areas approaching the Suez Canal. In response to a U.S. request for tightened security in those approaches, Weheba highlighted that the MoD had taken this "resource-intensive" action "only for U.S. ships."

17. (SBU) Weheba said he and ASD Rodman had agreed to hold the next Military Coordination Committee (MCC) in Cairo during the second week of November, 2005.

18. (U) LTG Whitcomb's party did not have an opportunity to clear this message before leaving Cairo.

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State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

GRAY